



EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

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news digest

99-001D

Executive Council meets in Denver, hears plans for General Convention

(ENS) At its February 12-15 meeting in Denver, the Executive Council continued to explore its role in the life of the church, heard plans for the General Convention in 2000, welcomed good news from the treasurer, and sampled the parish life in the diocese.

In his opening comments, Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold urged council members to see their role as "a very significant communication link in the life of our church," serving as ambassadors between the council and the dioceses and provinces in what he called a "two-way process linking the work of the church." The council "is not simply a conduit for information, or a body to carry out tasks, but also is an experience of the church." He added, "How we do our business, how we live our life as a council, is being the church—and that's both a challenge to us and also an indictment." It requires that "we need to look very carefully at how we do our business, how we balance our lives... our willingness to enter into a process of discernment, rather than decision-making, when that seems to be the wiser course or the more costly avenue to go."

In describing some of his recent activities, Griswold said that the teleconference on the first anniversary of his investiture as presiding bishop was "one of the more nerve-racking experiences of my life," but an example of "how valuable that kind of a communication link is."

He described his disappointment that the January meeting of the nine-member Consultation on Church Union (COCU) decided to move ahead without resolving differences over ministry, removing any reference to the historic episcopate from its draft proposing a new Churches Uniting in Christ.

Pamela Chinnis, president of the House of Deputies, said that, "despite the sincere efforts of many, the fact remains that our understanding of ministry is likely once again to place us outside the COCU circle." The Episcopal Church won't be able to participate in the launch in 2002 of the new covenant "unless there is dramatic progress in addressing the ministry issue."

In reporting on the emerging plans for the General Convention, Bishop Jerry Winterrowd told council, "It is providential that you are coming here in 2000. God has something special in mind for this church of ours." He added his hope that the convention "will restore our confidence and belief in ourselves as a church."

He described a Youth Event, running at the same time as convention in nearby Boulder, expressing his hopes that there would be some "interaction" between the two meetings. His visitations in the diocese have convinced him that 10,000 church members "will come down from the mountains for the Convention Eucharist."

Griswold reported on the discussion of a Jubilee theme in the meeting of the Planning and Arrangement Committee prior to council. "Jubilee means letting things rest. It means liberation, to be set free from all patterns of domination, attitudes which bind and oppress. It means loosening the bonds of fear, as well as being set free from the burden of debt, entering the realm of forgiveness."

General Convention, he contended, could be "a time for being a Jubilee community, as well as a legislative time. We should ask ourselves what really needs to be decided—and what needs more discernment." As he moves throughout the church, Griswold said that he perceives "a diverse center, with divergent and passionate views, but bound together in such a way that we can't dismiss one another, but committed to listen to one another." He hopes for "a fallow day of reflection, both individual and corporate, so that our decision-making can be grounded in Christ."

99-002D

Jubilee will be theme of 2000 General Convention in Denver

(ENS) The committee charged with planning the 2000 General Convention in Denver has embraced the biblical concept of Jubilee as the underlying theme and focus.

Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold told the Planning and Arrangements Committee at its February 11 meeting in Denver that Jubilee would signal a "new beginning" for the new millenium, suggesting that the church is "open to a new future" and the possibility of "thinking in some new ways."

In exploring the concept, Griswold said that Jubilee is a time of release, when people set each other free from oppressive patterns of relationship. "In baptism we are called to be Jubilee people so our question is, What do we need to set us free to be sign and symbol for God's people?"

In planning the convention, Griswold urged that time be set aside for personal and corporate reflection, time for considering "who we are as the people of God. It could create a climate so that our decision-making could be more reflective," he said. "And we may want to look more closely at what we are called to decide—and what may need more time." The result, he said, could be "a less urgent decision-making process. Sometimes we make decisions that aren't really decisions, leaving people feeling polarized."

Griswold said that the attempt to provide a different atmosphere for General Convention would not "overlook the fact that this is also a legislative body" but that it should also look for some balance, seeking a deeper level of conversation, and not be trapped into a series of up-and-down votes. His idea that the convention set aside a day of reflection, to focus on identity, vocation and mission as the basis for decision-making, was endorsed by committee members.

Pamela Chinnis, president of the House of Deputies, said that a Jubilee vision for the convention was "appropriate," and resonated with international efforts to explore the concept in commemorating the new millenium, especially in the World Council of Churches.

Griswold reminded the committee that Jubilee, based on the passages in the 25th chapter of Leviticus, was never implemented, eluding the community yet giving it hopeful energy and vision.

In outlining the plans the Diocese of Colorado is making to host the General Convention, Bishop Jerry Winterrowd expressed his hope that Denver would be a different kind of meeting. "You don't come to the mountain for business as usual," he said.

"We are finding out that this is an awesome task," added Tom Osborn, chair of the local committee. He said that committees are already very busy, eager that everyone who attends the convention will experience a dose of western hospitality. A parallel Youth Event, which could draw up to 2000, is scheduled just 18 miles away in Boulder and could supply what he called "lots of energy." Colorado Night will draw on the highly eclectic groups that shaped the state and it may be possible to build a replica of a western town in a hall adjacent to the Colorado Convention Center. He also announced that "Up With People," a dynamic and diverse singing group, will provide entertainment.

99-003D

Episcopalians celebrate consecration of the Anglican Communion's first female bishop

(ENS) The tenth anniversary of the historic consecration of Barbara C. Harris as the first woman to serve as a bishop in the worldwide Anglican Communion brought hundreds of Episcopalians from throughout the Episcopal Church to Boston for a weekend celebration February 13-14.

The celebration drew well wishers from the Diocese of Massachusetts and New England to three spirited liturgies, two at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul and one at St. Bartholomew's Church in Cambridge. Former presiding bishop Edmond Browning came from his retirement home in Oregon to serve as a celebrant, joined by the diocese's former bishops, John Coburn and John Burgess, the first black bishop to head a diocese in the church, as well as bishops from the dioceses of Western Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine and Rhode Island.

The weekend was an opportunity for remembrance, refocusing and rededication, "a mantra that I think all of us as Christians as we face the ending of a millenium and the dawn of a new one have for ourselves," said the Rev. Edward Rodman, canon missioner for the diocese, in his sermon at St. Bartholomew's. "Are we captives of our fears—or prisoners of our hope?" he asked the congregation.

In his sermon at the principal service, Bishop M. Thomas Shaw spoke of the importance of the consecration—an event that took place before a congregation of almost 8,000 and a much wider audience via live television and international media coverage. "I am proud to be your partner because of your historic consecration and what that's meant for women in the church and for men as well—and because of what this means for people of color, for all oppressed people," he said.

Shaw said that Harris was “an icon for us, somebody we can look at and see that power of Jesus Christ in you. You encourage us and you help us along so that we can make that next step. And all along the way, like you, if we make that offering we can liberate people,” he said. “We have enormous gratitude for the 10 years that you have given to the life of this diocese, a decade of offering yourself in all kinds of situations.” Shaw thanked Harris for helping him as a bishop. “If I couldn’t count on your courage, if I couldn’t count on your wisdom—and if I couldn’t count on your humor, I never would be able to offer myself this next day, this next step.”

During an emotional presentation, Shaw gave Harris a gold pin featuring her initials, set with 10 diamonds. “How many monks in Christian history have gotten to give gold and diamonds to a woman?” he quipped, provoking a standing ovation from the packed congregation at the cathedral. The offering was designated for a proposed new camp and conference center, to be named for Harris, and for her home parish, Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia.

99-004D

‘After Lambeth’ conference begins Church of England’s sexuality dialogue

(ENS) Representatives of three-quarters of the dioceses in the Church of England—including 12 bishops—attended a February 6 conference at the University of Derby sponsored by the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement. The group said it had planned the event to begin the dialogue called for the Lambeth Conference resolution on sexuality, in which Anglican bishops pledged to “listen to the experience of homosexual persons.”

Several of the bishops discussed the legislative process and problems that came up at the Lambeth Conference, which was held last summer. Two of the bishops also pointed to an atmosphere at the conference that seemed to deflect the focus from other business to the sexuality resolution and to focus on conservatives’ objections to it.

Richard Holloway, primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, called for forgiveness on all sides of the controversy. Later, Jan Nunley, rector of a church in Providence, Rhode Island, and press liaison for the women bishops at Lambeth, drew a comparison between the rise of fundamentalism in the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1980s and trends in the Anglican Communion in the 1990s. “While the geographic center of Anglicanism may have shifted to the Global South,” she said, “the nerve center of Anglican traditionalism is in the American South.”

99-005D

Conservatives petition Anglican primates for protection of orthodox in Episcopal Church

(ENS) Conservatives in the Episcopal Church, alleging that they are “increasingly marginalized and theologically offended,” have supported a petition sent to the world’s Anglican bishops, asking them for intervention to protect their orthodox status in the American church.

The petition was sent in the name of the Association of Anglican Congregations on Mission (AACM), a group of parishes that have left the Episcopal Church. It asks the orthodox bishops of the Anglican Communion for "protection of orthodox Anglicans in the United States until the Episcopal Church of the United States of America is reformed or replaced as a province of the Communion." The petition also asks the primates of the Anglican Communion for "emergency intervention" to protect orthodox believers.

AACM's petition to the primates includes almost 200 pages that "recounts the current state of the Episcopal Church and its response to and decisions made" since last summer's Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops. "It reports with detailed appendix, ECUSA's continued violation of Lambeth resolutions and open rejection of them via specific actions in conflict," including resolutions passed by dioceses.

The petition states that the "reformation" of the Episcopal Church must include conformity with resolutions on human sexuality, the authority of scripture, the authority of primates to intervene and limits of diversity. And it demands that "immediate action must be taken with respect to resolutions and canons to be adopted at the 2000 General Convention."

"If the revisionist ECUSA bishops do not cease violating the above resolutions and the 2000 General Convention does not take appropriate action to bring ECUSA into compliance, the Primates Meeting should take such action as may be appropriate to separate ECUSA from the Anglican Communion and replace it with an alternative province composed of a continuing Episcopal Church of orthodox believing Christians who submit to the sovereign authority of Scripture and are loyal to our Anglican tradition and formularies."

"We are working together to express the unity in the faith which we share and for a common goal of faithfulness to true Anglican, biblical orthodoxy in the Episcopal Church, or if necessary, in a continuing, alternative province in the Anglican Communion," said a statement by the First Promise Round Table endorsing the petition distributed in December.

Many conservatives are predicting a theological confrontation at the next General Convention, scheduled for the summer of 2000 in Denver, and are pressing for a non-geographic province to protect themselves. A recent meeting in Atlanta of 36 leaders in the movement put forward the name of a potential bishop to guide such a province—the Rev. John H. Rodgers, former dean of Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania. When asked by a reporter whether he would accept such an election, Rodgers responded that it might still be possible for the Episcopal Church to "repent," making radical action unnecessary. Yet he admitted that it "would require a major miracle, similar to the parting of the Red Sea."

Conservatives have raised the possibility of a diocese or province of orthodox Episcopalians before but Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey has sent clear signals that he would not recognize a separate jurisdiction outside of the Episcopal Church. "Are they aware they would not ever be recognized by the archbishop of Canterbury?" Bishop Mark Dyer of Virginia Seminary told a Washington reporter. "There isn't the slightest chance. Whatever differences the archbishop has with some practices in the Episcopal Church, he would never recognize this group."

99-006D

Generation X clergy meet to dream and plan

(ENS) What started last June as a gathering of the Episcopal Church's young clergy has grown into an action plan that will help generate and define Generation X's contribution to church thought and mission.

"Like Hannah, we're pregnant with something we prayed for. It doesn't have a name yet, and we can't quite explain it.... Yet we go on dreaming, and we do it because we love the church. Institution or no."

With these words from Beth Maynard, priest-in-charge at Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, Fairhaven, Massachusetts, and assistant rector at St. Gabriel's Church, Marion, Massachusetts, 20 young clergy gathered for Eucharist on the eve of the Feast of the Presentation at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in New York City.

They represented all eight provinces of the Episcopal Church in the United States. Their principal task in meeting in New York was to plan provincial gatherings along the same lines as "Gathering the neXt Generation," which brought together nearly half of the then-300 Episcopal priests under the age of 35 last June to build relationship, talk about their own feelings of joy and isolation, and begin the work of discerning their generation's mission in the church. The planning meeting also allowed them to review the fruit of that national gathering, to look at organizational issues that have arisen since then and, as Maynard said in her homily, to discern and dream the future of what has become an active movement of younger clergy in the Episcopal Church.

The biggest decision that came out of the three-day meeting was the decision not to incorporate "Gathering the neXt Generation." The decision means that "Gathering the neXt Generation" will be a fellowship network of clergy born in 1961 and after, and it will have two goals. The first goal is to continue to build and nurture relationships among Generation X clergy that put the commonality of their life in Christ ahead of political and theological differences. To that end, GTNG's ongoing work includes: Planning seven regional gatherings of young clergy to be held in the fall, plans for another national "Gathering the neXt Generation" conference in 2001, and distributing a newsletter for Gen X clergy, "Conversation in Community," whose first issue is due out in May, 1999.

The second goal is to encourage mission initiatives of Gen X clergy to serve the wider church. Many such initiatives are already underway or well into the planning stages. Among these are the Young Priests Initiative, an effort to reform the ordination processes of the church to encourage young vocations; and a Gen X Think Tank, tentatively scheduled for February in 2000, to provide an opportunity for a group of young priests to enter into a unique visioning process in which they will grapple with the future of the Episcopal Church and how the group might reach out to its generation.

The group also planned a young adult evangelism conference tackling questions such as What are the major concerns of Generation X, and how does the church respond? How do we interpret and not modify the Gospel for the current generation?

99-007D

WCC ecumenical team visits troubled Indonesia

(ENS) A joint World Council of Churches (WCC)/Christian Conference of Asia team that recently visited troubled Indonesia has called on the Indonesian government urgently to identify and bring to justice those responsible for the burning and destruction of places of worship, as well as violence involving Christians and Muslims.

The nine-member team, which toured the country and talked with President B.J. Habibie during its seven-day stay beginning January 27, said it was puzzled at the delay in identifying the perpetrators of such religious hostility in a country that had long been proud of its religious pluralism.

The group acknowledged that the Indonesian violence seen as religious hatred has roots in other places, particularly the country's economic slide over the past two years.

"The fault line here is the insecurity caused by the country's sudden plunge into poverty," said Patrick Mauney of the Episcopal Church's Office of Anglican and Global Relations, who was not part of the recent WCC team but who visited Indonesia early last year.

He pointed to the country's economic woes beginning in 1997, when the ailing Asian economy sent the value of Indonesia's currency plunging by as much as 80 percent, leading to bankruptcy and financial disarray that forced the country's once-prosperous middle class into poverty. Indonesian President Suharto and his family, which controlled billions of dollars' worth of industry there and often was perceived as corrupt, lost its grip as riots flared over food prices and political dissatisfaction. Suharto resigned last May, naming his vice-president, B.J. Habibie, as his successor.

"Without the 'glue' of Suharto," Mauney said, "the country started falling apart." The violence initially may have pitted religious groups against each other, "but it's not simply a religious conflict anymore." The world has seen the same kind of 'ungluing' occur in the recent past in both Northern Ireland and the former Yugoslavia, he said.

Despite Habibie's pledge to start reforms, rioting flared in Indonesia again in January, as Muslims and Christians battled with flaming arrows, rocks, machetes, and clubs. Dozens were killed.

The WCC/CCA visit came in the wake of concerns raised by delegates from Indonesian churches at the WCC's Eighth Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, last December. The Assembly promised to send an ecumenical team at the earliest opportunity. The 10-member team looked into the destruction of churches and other religious violence as well as the continued attacks on the ethnic Chinese minority and struggles in specific Indonesian provinces where there have been moves toward independence.

99-001

Executive Council meets in Denver, hears plans for General Convention

by James Solheim and Kathryn McCormick

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In his opening comments, Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold urged council members to see their role as “a very significant communication link in the life of our church,” serving as ambassadors between the council and the dioceses and provinces in what he called a “two-way process linking the work of the church.” The council “is not simply a conduit for information, or a body to carry out tasks, but also is an experience of the church.” He added, “How we do our business, how we live our life as a council, is being the church—and that’s both a challenge to us and also an indictment.” It requires that “we need to look very carefully at how we do our business, how we balance our lives... our willingness to enter into a process of discernment, rather than decision-making, when that seems to be the wiser course or the more costly avenue to go.”

Griswold said that council members should “accept the fact that we are a slice of the church and the way we listen to one another, the way we make our decisions, the way we give space, the way we pray together—all those things are integral to what we carry out of here...”

Ups and downs

In describing some of his recent activities, Griswold said that the teleconference on the first anniversary of his investiture as presiding bishop was “one of the more nerve-racking experiences of my life,” but an example of “how valuable that kind of a communication link is.”

He described his disappointment that the January meeting of the nine-member Consultation on Church Union (COCU) decided to move ahead without resolving differences over ministry, removing any reference to the historic episcopate from its draft proposing a new Churches Uniting in Christ (see ENS January 27, 1999.)

In her comments, Pamela Chinnis, president of the House of Deputies, said that, “despite the sincere efforts of many, the fact remains that our understanding of ministry is likely once again to place us outside the COCU circle.” The Episcopal Church won’t be able to participate in the launch in 2002 of the new covenant “unless there is dramatic progress in addressing the ministry issue.”

Chinnis reported that reaction to her proposal at the last council meeting that the church join the anti-bias campaign has been very positive. A number of dioceses have adopted strong anti-hate resolutions, she said.

Plans for the Denver General Convention in July of 2000 “are proceeding nicely,” she said. “We’re tightening up the schedule for committee meetings and legislative sessions to make room for periods of reflection and community-building. And we’re exploring a variety

of means to bring to life the presiding bishop's theme of Jubilee 2000, providing several opportunities for him to lead us, in his teaching role, in reflecting on the church's identity, vocation and mission."

Preparing for General Convention

In reporting on the emerging plans for the General Convention, Bishop Jerry Winterrowd told council, "It is providential that you are coming here in 2000. God has something special in mind for this church of ours." He added his hope that the convention "will restore our confidence and belief in ourselves as a church."

He described a Youth Event, running at the same time as convention in nearby Boulder, expressing his hopes that there would be some "interaction" between the two meetings. His visitations in the diocese have convinced him that 10,000 church members "will come down from the mountains for the Convention Eucharist."

Griswold reported on the discussion of a Jubilee theme in the meeting of the Planning and Arrangement Committee prior to council. "Jubilee means letting things rest. It means liberation, to be set free from all patterns of domination, attitudes which bind and oppress. It means loosening the bonds of fear, as well as being set free from the burden of debt, entering the realm of forgiveness."

General Convention, he contended, could be "a time for being a Jubilee community, as well as a legislative time. We should ask ourselves what really needs to be decided—and what needs more discernment." As he moves throughout the church, Griswold said that he perceives "a diverse center, with divergent and passionate views, but who are bound together in such a way that we can't dismiss one another, but remain committed to listen to one another." He looks forward to "a fallow day of reflection, both individual and corporate, so that our decision-making can be grounded in Christ."

Reflecting on that "diverse center," council members divided into four groups so they could simultaneously attend Sunday worship services in four different Denver churches. The congregations ranged from the formalities at the large, ornate Cathedral Church of St. John in the Wilderness to the much smaller St. Francis Church, which is closely involved in operating a day center for the city's homeless.

Good news from treasurer

Treasurer Stephen Duggan said that 1998 brought "unprecedented good news" of a \$3 million surplus, half of it from unexpected income and the other half from "underspending." Investments did better than predicted, he said, and careful management produced "very positive income."

Duggan reported that the real estate study of space at the Episcopal Church Center in New York City was progressing. "Architects have been asked to give us a stronger feel for the space and its uses," he said, noting that the building has 125,000 square feet of space but that the staff currently does not need more than 65,000 square feet. The architects, he said, are expected to present "several alternative scenarios" for the building's future use and the location of the offices.

He added that the building currently is undergoing repairs, including replacement of air-conditioning equipment. That chore alone, he said, incurs a \$2-3 million bill for removal of asbestos that had surrounds the old equipment.

In another matter, the treasurer noted that last year 68 percent of the church's dioceses gave funds to the national church in amounts equal to or above what was expected.

And this year the trend seems to be much the same. "It is a marvelous sign that the church wants to pull together and act in common for mission," he said.

The New York State Attorney General has acted on the complaint filed by a group seeking to investigate the management of church trust funds. The Attorney General's office produced a consent agreement that said that the trust funds are being managed adequately and asked that the national church continue to report on its actions in relation to the funds.

Duggan said the Attorney General's office also had affirmed that the steps taken by the church to investigate the handling of the funds in the wake of the embezzlement of \$2.2 million by former treasurer Ellen Cooke had been proper. The office asked that the church extend its investigation to a number of other trust funds to ensure that all was well with them, he said.

Dean M.L. Agnew, chair of the council's administration and finance committee, said that the committee will look at a wide range of material at hand in order to better interpret priorities for the church's budget and mission. He added that his group also was planning to produce documentation in order to better explain to dioceses how their annual assessments are used by the national church.

Trouble Spots

The Executive Council also turned its attention to several of the world's trouble spots, particularly Sierra Leone. The council called for a strengthening of the United Nations' presence there and for an extension of protective status for citizens of Sierra Leone who are currently in the United States. The council also asked the UN, the U.S. "and all other appropriate bodies" re-examine the criteria used before and after economic sanctions are imposed.

In a short but eloquent speech, Executive Council Member Francisco Duque of Colombia described the damage left by the January earthquake that struck his country. He said that besides the 1,000 persons killed and 5,000 injured by the quake, 36,000 homes were destroyed and that the country now needs 170,000 tons of food daily for people living within the disaster area.

The Episcopal Church in Colombia is aiding in the rebuilding of homes, he said, by helping to build simple, inexpensive houses quickly. He displayed a letter sent by Bishop Bernardo Merino to bishops in other Episcopal dioceses requesting that working people each contribute \$1 toward reconstruction in Colombia.

--James Solheim is director and Kathryn McCormick is associate director of the Episcopal Church's Office of News and Information.

99-002

Jubilee will be theme of 2000 General Convention in Denver

by James Solheim

(ENS) The committee charged with planning the 2000 General Convention in Denver has embraced the biblical concept of Jubilee as the underlying theme and focus.

Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold told the Planning and Arrangements Committee at its February 11 meeting in Denver that Jubilee would signal a "new beginning" for the new millenium, suggesting that the church is "open to a new future" and the possibility of "thinking in some new ways."

In exploring the concept, Griswold said that Jubilee is a time of release, when people set each other free from oppressive patterns of relationship. "In baptism we are called to be Jubilee people so our question is, What do we need to set us free to be sign and symbol for God's people?"

In planning the convention, Griswold suggested that time be set aside for personal and corporate reflection, time for considering who we are as the people of God. "It could create a climate so that our decision-making could be more reflective," he said. "And we may want to look more closely at what we are called to decide—and what may need more time." The result, he said, could be "a less urgent decision-making process. Sometimes we make decisions that aren't really decisions, leaving people feeling polarized."

Griswold said that the attempt to provide a different atmosphere for General Convention would not "overlook the fact that this is also a legislative body" but that it should also look for some balance, seeking a deeper level of conversation, and not be trapped into a series of up-and-down votes. His idea that the convention set aside a day of reflection, to focus on identity, vocation and mission as the basis for decision-making, was endorsed by committee members.

During a very supportive discussion among committee members, Bishop Jerry Winterrowd of Colorado reminded the presiding bishop of the insight from his trip to Assisi, where it became obvious that he was called to be part of the task of rebuilding the church. "We can't rebuild the church without Jubilee, without release," Winterrowd said.

Pamela Chinnis, president of the House of Deputies, said that a Jubilee vision for the convention was "appropriate," and resonated with international efforts to explore the concept in commemorating the new millenium especially in the World Council of Churches.

Griswold reminded the committee that Jubilee, based on the passages in the 25th chapter of Leviticus, was never implemented, eluding the community yet giving it hopeful energy and vision.

Based on his recent conversation with theologians, Griswold reported that many of them do not see themselves as part of the church's life, adding that he is eager to find a way to use their talents as a way to heighten the quality of discourse in the church.

Rocky Mountain high

In outlining the plans the Diocese of Colorado is making to host the General Convention, Winterrowd expressed his hope that Denver would be a different kind of meeting. "You don't come to the mountain for business as usual," he said.

"We are finding out that this is an awesome task," added Tom Osborn, chair of the local committee. He said that committees are already very busy, eager that everyone who attends the convention will experience a dose of western hospitality. A parallel Youth Event, which could draw up to 2000, is scheduled just 18 miles away in Boulder and could supply what he called "lots of energy." Colorado Night will draw on the highly eclectic groups that shaped the state and it may be possible to build a replica of a western town in a hall adjacent to the Colorado Convention Center. He also announced that "Up With People," a dynamic and diverse singing group, will provide entertainment.

Both Osborn and Winterrowd said that they hope the Convention Eucharist, which could draw 10,000 Episcopalians from throughout the diocese, could be held at the Pepsi Center, now under construction.

The Rev. Rosmari Sullivan, new executive officer of General Convention, asked the local committee to explore ways that those attending the convention could serve the local community, mentioning as one possibility Habitat for Humanity, which builds low-cost housing. She also said that her office is looking at ways to celebrate special ministries in the church as part of the convention program.

Lori Ionnitiu said that the General Convention Office has been looking at sites for future General Conventions. After some discussion, the committee recommended that Salt Lake City and Minneapolis be investigated further for the convention in 2003.

—James Solheim is director of the Episcopal Church's Office of News and Information.

99-003

Episcopalians celebrate consecration of the Anglican Communion's first female bishop

by Tracy J. Sukraw

(ENS) The tenth anniversary of the historic consecration of Barbara C. Harris as the first woman to serve as a bishop in the worldwide Anglican Communion brought hundreds of Episcopalians from throughout the Episcopal Church to Boston for a weekend celebration February 13-14.

The celebration drew well wishers from the Diocese of Massachusetts and New England to three spirited liturgies, two at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul and one at St. Bartholomew's Church in Cambridge. Former presiding bishop Edmond Browning came from his retirement home in Oregon to serve as a celebrant, joined by the diocese's former bishops, John Coburn and John Burgess, the first black bishop to head a diocese in the church, as well as bishops from the dioceses of Western Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine and Rhode Island.

The weekend was an opportunity for remembrance, refocusing and rededication, “a mantra that I think all of us as Christians as we face the ending of a millenium and the dawn of a new one have for ourselves,” said the Rev. Edward Rodman, canon missionary of the diocese, in his sermon at St. Bartholomew’s. “Are we captives of our fears—or prisoners of our hope?” he asked the congregation.

An exhibit at the diocesan offices celebrated a decade of women in the episcopate and included numerous photos and artifacts from the election and consecration of Harris, with handwritten notes taken during the election in September 1987, badges from her attendance at the 1988 Lambeth Conference as a member of the press corps—and 1998 when she attended as a bishop, as well as newspaper articles and letters of congratulations and condemnation in the wake of her election.

A lifetime of service

In his sermon at the principal service, Bishop M. Thomas Shaw spoke of the importance of the consecration—an event that took place before a congregation of almost 8,000 and a much wider audience via live television and international media coverage. “I am proud to be your partner because of your historic consecration and what that’s meant for women in the church and for men as well—and because of what this means for people of color, for all oppressed people,” he said.

Shaw put the five-year partnership as bishops in Massachusetts he has shared with Harris in a wider context, saying that he had come to understand that the real significance of the event in 1989 that made her famous should be seen as her lifetime service in the Episcopal Church that led her to take her place in history—as a child going to church every Sunday and singing in the choir, as a woman with an active lay ministry at parish, diocesan and national levels in the church, as a civil rights activist devoted to the causes of social justice. “Not this big offering in your sixth decade, but all the offerings along the way,” he said.

Shaw said that Harris was “an icon for us, somebody we can look at and see that power of Jesus Christ in you. You encourage us and you help us along so that we can make that next step. And all along the way, like you, if we make that offering we can liberate people,” he said. “We have enormous gratitude for the 10 years that you have given to the life of this diocese, a decade of offering yourself in all kinds of situations.” Shaw thanked Harris for helping him as a bishop. “If I couldn’t count on your courage, if I couldn’t count on your wisdom—and if I couldn’t count on your humor, I never would be able to offer myself this next day, this next step.”

During an emotional presentation, Shaw gave Harris a gold pin featuring her initials, set with 10 diamonds. “How many monks in Christian history have gotten to give gold and diamonds to a woman?” he quipped, provoking a standing ovation from the packed congregation at the cathedral. The offering was designated for a proposed new camp and conference center, to be named for Harris, and for her home parish, Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia.

Forum highlights women in episcopate

During an opening forum, Browning, who was chief consecrator, at the Harris consecration, and the Rev. Suzanne Hiatt, retired professor at Episcopal Divinity School and one of the first 11 women ordained to the priesthood during an “irregular” liturgy in 1974, sketched the key events that paved the way for women in the church.

Browning recalled the controversy in the church and some of the mean-spirited reaction prior to the consecration of Harris. He shared his reaction to protests during the consecration service, telling the forum, "My legs started shaking so bad. I think it was because of anger, that I was really upset. All of a sudden the Holy Spirit descended upon all of us," he said. While the protestors spoke, Barbara's mother Beatrice walked across the aisle and placed her hand on her daughter's arm. "And I could feel her hand on my shoulder, too," Browning said. "Suddenly my legs weren't shaking any more and I stood up and said, We've been through all of this and we will proceed with this service. The whole place went berserk. I've never heard such an ovation in my life, and that ovation has been going on for the sake of justice."

Another participant in the forum, the Roman Catholic lay feminist theologian Jane Redmont, spoke of the ecumenical impact and the controversy it provoked, particularly among those in Catholic and Orthodox traditions who were convinced that the consecration of Harris was a threat to Christian unity. "We are not dying and fighting over rifts between Anglicans and Greek Orthodox and Protestants and Catholics," she said of her response at the time. "The rifts are between races. The rifts are between northern and southern hemispheres. The rifts are between men and women. The rifts are between rich and poor—and the rifts are within each of our community denominations, between fundamentalists and non-fundamentalists." She concluded, "By those standards, Bishop Harris is a maker of unity, and not a breaker of unity."

Hiatt said that, despite some "retrogressive things about women bishops" at last summer's Lambeth Conference, there is "no question that the ordination of women has changed the face of ministry. It has made a kinder, gentler church, and those of you who remember the church of the old days would probably agree to that. But we haven't come as far as we should. The real problems that women are having in the world are much greater," she said, citing the continuing problems of poverty and violence.

At a gathering of friends and family, Harris thanked those who "have shaped and molded me and my ministry into what it is today and continue to do so. I know God isn't finished with me yet," she said.

—Tracy Sukraw is editor of Episcopal Times, the newspaper of the Diocese of Massachusetts.

99-004

‘After Lambeth’ conference begins Church of England’s sexuality dialogue

by Susan Erdey

(ENS) An all-day “After Lambeth” conference organized by Britain’s Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement (LGCM) drew representatives from three-quarters of the Church of England’s dioceses—including 12 bishops—to the University of Derby campus in Derby, England, on February 6. Some 270 people attended the conference from the Church of England, the Church in Wales, and the Scottish Episcopal Church.

Conference organizers said they planned the event to begin the dialogue called for in the Lambeth Conference resolution on sexuality, in which Anglican bishops pledged to “listen to the experience of homosexual persons.” The resolution also declared that homosexual activity is “incompatible with Scripture.” And it advised against ordaining open homosexuals or blessing their unions.

The event began with a panel of three English bishops—Michael Bourke of Wolverhampton, Peter Selby of Worcester, and Anthony Priddis of Warwick—reflecting on their experiences at Lambeth. None was in the conference’s sexuality subsection of bishops who shared early discussions on the resolution.

Priddis began by explaining the complex dynamics of the legislative process, which he said “raises the question of the advisability of passing resolutions” during Lambeth Conferences. Selby expressed concern that the work of the international debt subsection, of which he was a member, may have been deliberately “swept out of attention” by Western conservatives pushing the sexuality issue. “There was a profound atmosphere of the sinister hanging over this event,” he noted, repeating a statement he made after Lambeth comparing it to the Nazi Party rallies at Nuremberg. Bourke recalled that even the Bible study on the morning of the sexuality plenary seemed to deny the existence of an identity based on sexual orientation—a denial “we don’t apply in any other area” of human life, including race and gender.

Fragment of pain

Keynote speaker Richard Holloway, Bishop of Edinburgh and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, a long-time supporter of lesbian and gay issues in the Anglican Communion. Holloway began by recalling “fragments of remembered pain” from Lambeth, including what he called the “evangelical tragedy” of an encounter between some University of Kent students and anti-gay demonstrators outside one of the residence halls. “Their encounter with Christianity shamed Jesus and scandalized them,” Holloway said, by wrapping “blind prejudice and ugly hatred in the name of Jesus.”

But, he added, the sexuality resolution was also a reflection of what he called “necessary compromises” with the revolutionary message of Jesus needed to insure the survival of the church as an institution. “People are better at guarding the process than the vision it serves,” said Holloway. He called for forgiveness on all sides of the controversy, and an acknowledgement that “we are more likely to be clear about others’ compromises than our own.”

Holloway was quoted in the British press as lambasting the traditionalist bishops, largely from Africa and Asia, who had outvoted the liberals at Lambeth, saying that many “seemed to treat the Bible like an infallible law book that needed no interpretation and allowed no variation in approach...It was interpreted by them as though it had been personally written by God and sent by registered mail.”

Later, Jan Nunley, rector of a church in Providence, Rhode Island, who served as press liaison for the women bishops at Lambeth, drew a comparison between the rise of fundamentalism in the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1980s and trends in the Anglican Communion in the 1990s.

“While the geographic center of Anglicanism may have shifted to the Global South, the nerve center of Anglican traditionalism is in the American South,” Nunley said. “If there are no direct connections between Anglican traditionalists and Baptist fundamentalists—and I have no proof that there are—it certainly seems that these Anglicans are good students of the history which has unfolded in their own ecclesial back yard.”

Bishops Holloway and Selby joined Nunley and members of the LGCM Anglican Forum in a panel discussion to field questions from the audience. To a query about how to avoid demonizing those opposed to lesbians and gays in the Church, Nunley answered with a quote from Episcopalian Gail Godwin’s novel *Father Melancholy’s Daughter*. “Remember that each one is ‘also a child of God’, no matter how trying we may find them to be,” she said. “They are afraid. But God has not given Christians a spirit of fear.”

The Rev. Richard Kirker, LGCM general secretary, reported that some English seminarians were apparently encouraged not to attend the conference, a fact which “distressed” Selby.

The presence of bishops at the gathering marked a first for lesbians and gays in the Church of England. Dioceses represented included Bath & Wells; Birmingham; Blackburn; Bradford; Bristol; Carlisle; Chelmsford; Chester; Chichester; Coventry; Derby; Durham; Gloucester; Guildford; Hereford; Leicester; Lichfield; Lincoln; Liverpool; London; Manchester; Oxford; Portsmouth; Ripon; Rochester; Salisbury; Sheffield; Southwark; Southwell; Wakefield; Worcester; and York.

Although the church’s leadership says it has no plans to depart from its present policy, which bars practicing homosexuals from becoming priests, a British newspaper reported, traditionalists fear that pressure is fast growing for change. Philip Hacking, chairman of the evangelical group Reform, was quoted as saying, “There is no doubt that some bishops – led by the likes of Richard Holloway – would like to overturn what the majority of Anglicans believe.

“Bishops who seek to undermine the Bible’s teaching – as endorsed by the overwhelming majority of Anglican bishops worldwide – are bringing a crisis on the Church of England.”

--Susan Erdey is an editor and writer at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island.

99-005

Conservatives petition Anglican primates for protection of orthodox in Episcopal Church

by James Solheim

(ENS) Conservatives in the Episcopal Church, alleging that they are "increasingly marginalized and theologically offended," have supported a petition sent to the world's Anglican bishops, asking them for intervention to protect their orthodox status in the American church.

The petition was sent in the name of the Association of Anglican Congregations on Mission (AACM), a group of parishes that have left the Episcopal Church. It asks the orthodox bishops of the Anglican Communion for "protection of orthodox Anglicans in the United States until the Episcopal Church of the United States of America is reformed or replaced as a province of the Communion." The petition also asks the primates of the Anglican Communion for "emergency intervention" to protect orthodox believers.

AACM's petition to the primates includes almost 200 pages that "recounts the current state of the Episcopal Church and its response to and decisions made" since last summer's Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops. "It reports with detailed appendix, ECUSA's continued violation of Lambeth resolutions and open rejection of them via specific actions in conflict," including resolutions passed by dioceses.

The petition states that the "reformation" of the Episcopal Church must include conformity with resolutions on human sexuality, the authority of Scripture, the authority of primates to intervene and limits of diversity. And it demands that "immediate action must be taken with respect to resolutions and canons to be adopted at the 2000 General Convention."

"If the revisionist ECUSA bishops do not cease violating the above resolutions and the 2000 General Convention does not take appropriate action to bring ECUSA into compliance, the Primates Meeting should take such action as may be appropriate to separate ECUSA from the Anglican Communion and replace it with an alternative province composed of a continuing Episcopal Church of orthodox believing Christians who submit to the sovereign authority of Scripture and are loyal to our Anglican tradition and formularies."

"We are working together to express the unity in the faith which we share and for a common goal of faithfulness to true Anglican, biblical orthodoxy in the Episcopal Church, or if necessary, in a continuing, alternative province in the Anglican Communion," said a statement by the First Promise Round Table endorsing the petition distributed in December.

The Rev. Chuck Murphy, leader of the First Promise coalition, argued that the American church was "in the middle of a major struggle" and needed the help of "an international alliance of primates" who hold orthodox views.

Many conservatives are predicting a theological confrontation at the next General Convention, scheduled for the summer of 2000 in Denver and are pressing for a non-geographic province to protect themselves. A recent meeting in Atlanta of 36 leaders in the movement put forward the name of a potential bishop to guide such a province—the Rev. John H. Rodgers, former dean of Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania. When asked by a reporter whether he would accept such an election, Rodgers responded that it might still be possible for the Episcopal Church to "repent," making radical

action unnecessary. Yet he admitted that it “would require a major miracle, similar to the parting of the Red Sea.”

Conservatives have raised the possibility of a diocese or province of orthodox Episcopalians before but Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey has sent clear signals that he would not recognize a separate jurisdiction outside of the Episcopal Church. “Are they aware they would not ever be recognized by the archbishop of Canterbury?” Bishop Mark Dyer of Virginia Seminary told a Washington reporter. “There isn’t the slightest chance. Whatever differences the archbishop has with some practices in the Episcopal Church, he would never recognize this group.”

--James Solheim is director of the Episcopal Church’s Office of News and Information.

99-006

Generation X clergy meet to dream and plan

by Michael Kinman

(ENS) What started last June as a gathering of the Episcopal Church’s young clergy has grown into an action plan that will help generate and define Generation X’s contribution to church thought and mission.

“Like Hannah, we’re pregnant with something we prayed for. It doesn’t have a name yet, and we can’t quite explain it.... Yet we go on dreaming, and we do it because we love the church. Institution or no.”

With these words from Beth Maynard, priest-in-charge at Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, Fairhaven, Massachusetts, and assistant rector at St. Gabriel’s Church, Marion, Massachusetts, 20 young clergy gathered for Eucharist on the eve of the Feast of the Presentation at St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church in New York City.

They represented all eight provinces of the Episcopal Church in the United States. Their principal task in meeting in New York was to plan provincial gatherings along the same lines as “Gathering the neXt Generation,” which brought together nearly half of the then-300 Episcopal priests under the age of 35 last June to build relationship, talk about their own feelings of joy and isolation, and begin the work of discerning their generation’s mission in the church.

The planning meeting also allowed them to review the fruit of that national gathering, to look at organizational issues that have arisen since then and, as Maynard said in her homily, to discern and dream the future of what has become an active movement of younger clergy in the Episcopal Church.

The biggest decision that came out of the three-day meeting was the decision not to incorporate “Gathering the neXt Generation.” Staying unincorporated prevents GTNG from applying for funds from most large granting foundations, which require tax-exempt incorporated status. The consensus not to incorporate came out of wanting to try something new, to resist the limits imposed by a formal structure, and to operate from a position of trusting God.

“All conventional wisdom says we should incorporate—it’s the normal thing to do at this stage of an organization. But we want to try something different,” said one member of the group. “‘Give us this day our daily bread’ means asking God to sustain us just for

today—no more—and trusting that God will be there with another day's bread tomorrow. That's how we want this to be, not building up a storehouse of funds, but trusting God that if the initiatives that spring out of the spirit of 'Gathering the neXt Generation' are of God, that the resources to support them will come, too."

The decision means that "Gathering the neXt Generation" will be a fellowship network of clergy born in 1961 and after, and it will have two goals.

The first goal, the group decided, is to continue to build and nurture relationships among Generation X clergy that put the commonality of their life in Christ ahead of political and theological differences. To that end, GTNG's ongoing work includes:

- Planning seven regional gatherings of young clergy to be held in the fall.
- Plans for another national "Gathering the neXt Generation" conference in 2001.
- Distributing a newsletter for Gen X clergy, "Conversation in Community," whose first issue is due out in May, 1999. It will aim to build and maintain community and to provide a forum for theological and personal conversation on ministry in the 21st Century and ministry to that generation.
- Communicating through mailings and emails to the entire demographic. A listserv—an email discussion group open to anyone in the demographic—now has 68 members and is growing (for more information, email the Rev. Clayton Crawley at clayton@crawley.net).

The second goal is to encourage mission initiatives of Gen X clergy to serve the wider church. Many such initiatives are already underway or well into the planning stages. Among these are:

- The Young Priests Initiative, an effort to reform the ordination processes of the church to encourage young vocations.
- A Gen X Think Tank, tentatively scheduled for February in 2000, in conjunction with Trinity Church, Wall Street. It will provide an opportunity for a group of young priests to enter into a unique visioning process in which they will grapple with the future of the Episcopal Church and how the group might reach out to its generation.
- A book of essays entitled *Gathering the neXt Generation: Essays on the Formation and Ministry of GenX Priests*.
- A young adult evangelism conference tackling questions such as What are the major concerns of Generation X, and how does the church respond? How do we interpret and not modify the Gospel for the current generation?
- The "Church in the Third Millenium Working Group," an ongoing entity made up of Gen X clergy along the model of Associated Parishes, identifying and addressing the major issues facing the church in the next century.
- A seminarian mentoring network that would link young seminarians with young clergy through the Internet.

"It's amazing," Marshall Shelly, associate priest at Grace Church in Madison, New Jersey, said of the initiatives that have sprung from GTNG. "A little idea has expanded into a great idea for people who lamented they were the only ones."

"I'm stoked," said Chris Rankin-Williams, associate priest at All Saints by the Sea, Santa Barbara, California. "I really feel that something incredible is going on in the church and the Spirit is really moving, and I'm grateful to be along for the ride."

—Michael Kinman is associate priest at St. Michael and St. George Church in St. Louis, Missouri, and a member of the Gen X planning group.

99-007

WCC ecumenical team visits troubled Indonesia

by Kathryn McCormick

(ENS) A joint World Council of Churches (WCC)/Christian Conference of Asia team that recently visited troubled Indonesia has called on the Indonesian government urgently to identify and bring to justice those responsible for the burning and destruction of places of worship, as well as violence involving Christians and Muslims.

The nine-member team, which toured the country and talked with President B.J. Habibie during its seven-day stay beginning January 27, said it was puzzled at the delay in identifying the perpetrators of such religious hostility in a country that had long been proud of its religious pluralism.

The group acknowledged that the Indonesian violence seen as religious hatred has roots in other places, particularly the country's economic slide over the past two years.

"The fault line here is the insecurity caused by the country's sudden plunge into poverty," said Patrick Mauney of the Episcopal Church's Office of Anglican and Global Relations, who was not part of the recent WCC team but who visited Indonesia early last year.

He pointed to the country's economic woes beginning in 1997, when the ailing Asian economy sent the value of Indonesia's currency plunging by as much as 80 percent, leading to bankruptcy and financial disarray that forced the country's once-prosperous middle class into poverty. Indonesian President Suharto and his family, which controlled billions of dollars' worth of industry there and often was perceived as corrupt, lost its grip as riots flared over food prices and political dissatisfaction. Suharto resigned last May, naming his vice-president, Habibie, as his successor.

"Without the 'glue' of Suharto," Mauney said, "the country started falling apart." The violence initially may have pitted religious groups against each other, "but it's not simply a religious conflict anymore." The world has seen the same kind of 'ungluing' occur in the recent past in both Northern Ireland and the former Yugoslavia, he said.

Despite Habibie's pledge to start reforms, rioting flared in Indonesia again in January, as Muslims and Christians battled with flaming arrows, rocks, machetes, and clubs. Dozens were killed.

The WCC/CCA visit came in the wake of concerns raised by delegates from Indonesian churches at the WCC's Eighth Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, last December. The Assembly promised to send an ecumenical team at the earliest opportunity. The 10-member team looked into the destruction of churches and other religious violence as well as the continued attacks on the ethnic Chinese minority and struggles in specific Indonesian provinces where there have been moves toward independence.

The team, headed by the Rev. David Gill, head of the National Council of Churches in Australia, did not include an Anglican, owing perhaps to the fact that Indonesia has what Mauney described as a very small Anglican presence. Members ranged from representatives of the United Evangelical Mission in Germany to the Hong Kong Christian Council.

In their report, they said that the situation in Indonesia is one of absolute confusion in which religion and ethnicity have been exploited by various power elites. No one is sure about the future, they said, noting that more than 200 parties have registered for the parliamentary elections scheduled in June.

They said they were encouraged to hear of Muslim neighbors who had provided shelter to Christian families under attack and of Muslim young people who had protected a church from destruction.

Indonesian President Habibie told them he would try to bring the perpetrators of violence to justice, the team said, but according to their report he added, "I am involved in Mission Impossible."

After its visit, the group called for a resolution to the violence; resolution to the demands for self-determination in the provinces of East Timor and Irian Jaya; better ways to attack the country's sudden, widespread poverty, and an easing of the conditions imposed on Indonesia by international creditors such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

—Kathryn McCormick is associate director of the Episcopal Church's Office of News and Information.

99-008

New staff appointments announced at Episcopal Church Center

by Kathryn McCormick

(ENS) A number of new appointees have joined the Episcopal Church Center staff.

Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold has named **Margaret (Midge) Roof**, of Danville, Indiana, associate deputy for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations. She assumed her new post on February 1.

Roof served four years as president of the Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical Officers (EDEO) network and, according to the Rev. David Perry, deputy for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, Roof "has broad contacts throughout the ecumenical and interfaith relations world. She brings a creative and committed heart and mind to the work of unity for all God's people."

Griswold applauded the appointment of Roof, "a seasoned ecumenist with broad experience, because I feel strongly that our ecumenical and interfaith dialogue needs to be expanded—and for that we need additional staff. And as a lay person she brings a perspective that too often gets lost in the more rarified atmosphere of ecumenical discourse."

Acknowledging that her work will have many facets, Roof said in a short interview that "one of the things I'm most interested in is reopening conversations with interfaith partners. I see us reaching out in different directions."

Her background indicates a broad range of experience and interests that will be important in her new post.

A graduate of St. Mary-of-the-Woods, a Roman Catholic college for women in Terre Haute, Indiana, she received a master's degree in English from Indiana University. It was while she studied for the master's that she became interested in literature of the Holocaust, she said. That study led her into work in Christian-Jewish relations.

She later served as consultant for videotapes and a study guide on Holocaust survivors. The materials were designed for use in Indiana public schools. She also was consultant to the Presiding Bishop's Committee on Christian-Jewish Relations and a member of the Episcopal-Jewish Relations Committee of EDEO.

Planning a meeting of the Workshop on Christian Unity in Indianapolis deepened her interest in ecumenical matters, Roof said. She served as EDEO representative on the Lutheran-Episcopal Joint Coordinating Committee for five years and has worked with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

In her new position she serves as a member of the ecumenical team that is directly accountable to the presiding bishop, who is the chief ecumenical officer of the Episcopal Church. She will plan and participate in dialogues, work through a number of organizations to promote interreligious relationships, and, among other duties, provide an information resource on ecumenical matters to leaders of the Episcopal Church and others.

"One of the Ecumenical Office's major tasks," she said, "is to encourage people to take up their vocation for Christian unity." Or, as she put it in the answer to a question posed to her during the selection process, "Ecumenism is not just another desk or program at 815, but the vocation of all the baptized."

A cradle Episcopalian, Roof is the wife of the Rev. John Roof, rector of St. Augustine's Church in Danville. The couple has three children.

In other appointments, **the Rev. Ben E. Helmer** has been named interim officer for Rural and Small Community Ministries. He joined the Congregational Ministries staff on February 1, after spending 5 ½ years as the Diocese of West Missouri's Small Church Officer. Prior to that he worked in the Diocese of Western Kansas for 18 years, 11 of which he served as Archdeacon for Ministry Development. Helmer succeeds the Rev. Dr. Allen Brown, who retired in 1997.

Also new to Congregational Ministries is the **Rev. John E. Robertson**. He assumed the position of interim officer for Native American Ministries, on February 1, after serving as Canon Missioner for Indian Work in the Diocese of Minnesota and as special priest in charge of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Windom, Minnesota. Robertson succeeds Ginny Doctor, who returned to the Diocese of Alaska to resume her ministry there.

—Kathryn McCormick is associate director of the Office of News and Information of the Episcopal Church.



news briefs

99-009

Bishops meet in Washington to work on world debt issue

(ENS) At the invitation of Bishops Ron Haines and Jane Holmes Dixon, a group of bishops met in Washington, D.C., in January to follow up on the Lambeth Conference's action on world debt and the alleviation of poverty. "We pledged ourselves to be in solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world regarding debt and economic justice, and committed to continue the work begun at Lambeth," said Dixon. Bishops Frank Allan of Atlanta, Charles Bennison, Jr. of Pennsylvania, Peter James Lee of Virginia, John Rabb of Maryland and Orris Walker, Jr. of Long Island attended the meeting at the College of Preachers, planned by lay and clergy leaders from the diocese and the church's Office of Government Relations. The group met with key government and nonprofit partners, including officials of the Department of the Treasury, the World Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the General Accounting Office, the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops, Oxfam, 50 Years is Enough, and Accion International. The meeting discussed the next steps needed to raise awareness of the issues and the bishops agreed to raise the issue at the next House of Bishops meeting.

Study compares attitudes of Lutherans and Episcopalians

(ENS-Metro Lutheran) According to a study by a political scientist at Gustavus Adolphus College in Minnesota, the majority of clergy in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) think the denomination should enter a full communion agreement with the Episcopal Church. Prof. Chris Gilbert is using a National Science Foundation grant to compare attitudes of Lutheran and Episcopal clergy and his initial results indicate that 58 percent of ELCA clergy and 66 percent of Episcopal clergy are in favor of full communion. When asked about the attitudes of their congregations, 48 percent of the Episcopal clergy but only 36 percent of the ELCA clergy think their parishioners favor full communion. The survey revealed strong support for women in the ministry, with 94 percent of the Lutherans and 90 percent of the Episcopalians responding favorably. Twice as many Episcopal clergy as ELCA describe themselves as "high church," (26.6 to 13.8 percent) and twice as many ELCA call themselves "evangelical" (42.6 to 21.5 percent). Clergy of both churches describe themselves as politically liberal, with almost 70 percent voting for President Bill Clinton. But 70 percent of ELCA clergy, and 63 percent of Episcopal clergy, said they believe their members voted for Bob Dole. Gilbert said that he hopes to explore the differences between clergy and their congregations.

Chinnis is doctored—again

(ENS) Pamela Chinnis, president of the House of Deputies, was honored by her alma mater, the College of William and Mary, with an honorary doctorate of humane letters at ceremonies on February 6. The citation commended her for having “served your church, this college, higher education, and our society with boundless energy, quiet wisdom, and subtle wit, and have earned both respect and affection from all who know you.” The citation pointed out that Chinnis was the first woman to serve as senior warden of her parish in Washington, D.C., president of the diocesan and national Episcopal Church Women, first woman to preside over the House of Deputies, member of the church’s Executive Council, delegate to the Anglican Consultative Council, chair of the Presiding Bishop’s Committee for the Full Participation of Women in the Church, and numerous councils and commissions. At a meeting of the Executive Council in Denver, a few days later, Chinnis said that she also preached at historic Bruton Parish in Williamsburg, where she was confirmed while a student at William and Mary. “Standing there in the pulpit, I remembered myself as an eager young coed being drawn deeper into the power of the Gospel and the life of the church. It was an extraordinary experience. I am so deeply grateful to have found my way into the Episcopal Church,” she said.

Archbishop mourns death of King Hussein

(ACNS) The Archbishop of Canterbury issued the following statement after being informed of the death of King Hussein of Jordan:

“For five decades King Hussein has been one of the most significant leaders in a region of the world where leadership has so often made the difference between war and peace. His compassion for all people, reflected in his concern for Christian minorities, has endeared him to millions, not only in his own country but across the globe. Anglicans worldwide will join the people of Jordan in mourning a man whose absence will be felt deeply whenever men and women of goodwill are to be found. With them we pray that the goal for which he worked so tirelessly, peace with justice in the Middle East, may be finally achieved. He could have no more fitting epitaph.”

Russian Orthodox setting the record straight

(WCC) At a recent meeting of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) in Moscow a report was heard on the World Council of Churches (WCC) Eighth Assembly that included details of the assembly’s decision to set up a special commission to examine Orthodox concerns with and participation in the WCC. This followed media speculation that the ROC had suspended its membership in the WCC.

The Holy Synod agreed that, until the results of the special commission were known, the Russian Orthodox Church would suspend its active participation in the regular work of the WCC. In practice, this means elected Russian Orthodox Church members of the WCC executive committee and central committee would attend meetings but would not actively participate in general discussion or voting.

The Holy Synod agreed that the church would fully participate in the work of the special commission.

Death penalty opposed for two charged in Shepard killing

(ENS) Integrity, Inc., the national organization of lesbian and gay Episcopalians, recently criticized a decision by the prosecutors in the murder of Matthew Shepard to seek the death penalty.

Shepard was the 21-year-old gay Wyoming college student who was beaten, tied to a fence in near-freezing temperatures and left to die. His death was given widespread coverage and drew messages of sympathy and concern from several church leaders and President Bill Clinton.

"Matthew Shepard's murder in October, 1998 was a tragedy that deeply affected millions of people all over the world," Integrity said in a statement. "In particular it resonated with gay and lesbian people because many, if not most of us, have lived in fear of violent acts against us and repeatedly been the victims of prejudicial speech containing suggestions of violence."

The statement continued, "Now, with sadness, we understand that the prosecutors of Matthew Shepard's [alleged] killers seek the death penalty against them. We oppose this further act of violence and ask them to reconsider their decision and not apply the capital punishment statute in this case. We do so informed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the long-held belief of our Episcopal Church that the death penalty is simply and completely wrong. Violence only begets violence. Lesbian and gay people have known violence in all its insidious forms. It is not the death of his killers that will bring about justice for Matthew Shepard. It is the conversion of all our hearts from the ways of violence and hate."

Conference on inclusion of gays and lesbians in the church

(ENS) A one-day conference on "Building An Inclusive Church," has been planned for April 17 in Minneapolis to address the issue of full inclusion in the church of gays and lesbians.

The planning committee for this event consisted of both homosexual and heterosexual members of the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and American Baptist (USA) Churches; the United Church of Christ and Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

The gathering will feature as keynote speaker the Rev. Paul W. Egertson, bishop of the Southern California West Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Egertson, who has taught theology courses on "Homosexuality: Taking A Second Look" and received the Voice of Faithfulness award from the Lutheran Lesbian and Gay Ministry in San Francisco, will speak on "The Stranger in Our Midst."

The dozen workshop topics include "Discovering the Bible As Our Friend, Not Our Enemy," "Getting Beyond Stereotypes," "Why Must We Be Intentionally Inclusive?" "Defining and Overcoming Obstacles to Inclusion" and "Defining GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender) Ministry."

"None of us officially represents our denomination and we aren't planning discussion specifically on the sticky question of ordination," said Howard Johnson, retired United Methodist clergyman and chair of the planning committee. "But we are united in our concern about continuing misinformation regarding those in our communities of faith who are GLBT."

"We believe that when we are not inclusive and loving to one another within the church, we, as the body of Christ, have no clear witness of healing and reconciliation for a troubled world. This event was planned with the deep conviction that we must be an inclusive church in order to be a faithful witness to the God whose love embraces us all," Johnson concluded.

To register or obtain further information visit the conference web site at: <http://www.winternet.com/~rwhenn/inclusive.htm> or call (612) 729-7457.

Episcopal Black Ministries and Church Publishing offer music

(ENS) The National Office of Black Ministries of the Episcopal Church and Church Publishing Company recently announced the availability of "It Is Well With My Soul" selections from *Lift Every Voice and Sing II*.

This compilation features 21 selections sung by the Adult Choir of Grace Church of Norfolk, Virginia, under the direction of Carl W. Haywood, organist and Terry Butler, assistant organist.

To order a compact disc (#290-3 - \$16.95) or cassette (#289-X - \$11.95) call 800/242-1918 or email: churchpublishing@cpg.org

NCC joins letter campaign opposing Israeli government policy

(NCC) The National Council of Churches has announced that Joan B. Campbell, general secretary, has joined with 26 other church leaders in letters protesting the Israeli government policy of confiscating identification cards from East Jerusalem Palestinians, with the consequent loss of right of residency in Jerusalem.

Last October Patriarch Diodoros I, Patriarch Michel Sabbah and Patriarch Torkom Manoogian, three principal heads of churches in Jerusalem, had written to the Israeli Minister of the Interior, expressing deep concern about the 600 percent increase over two years in the number of cards being confiscated.

They called on the State of Israel particularly to safeguard the rights of the Christian communities, halt future confiscations and rescind recent changes in its policies. There have been no changes.

Carey dismisses reports that he is thinking of retirement

Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey has dismissed reports in the British press that he is "emotionally and physically exhausted" and considering retirement when he reaches the age of 65 in two years. The London *Sunday Times* carried a story quoting Bishop Graham Jones, a former member of the archbishop's staff, as saying that Carey lacked the "enormous amount of stamina" required. Carey said that he was "fed up with this kind of mischievous rumor-mongering" and said, "I am very vigorous and in very good form." He even suggested that he might continue in office until 2005. "There is a lot of life left in me yet," he said. Carey has not openly discussed his plans before. During a trip to Rome, to meet with the Pope and to open the new Anglican Centre, he "kept up a tremendous dawn-to-midnight pace during his three-day visit," said Canon Richard Marsh, Carey's secretary for ecumenical affairs. "He is in fighting form," he said.

People

Scott T. Evans has become the first lay person to serve as president of Province IV of the Episcopal Church. She's a member of St. Stephen's Church in Durham, North Carolina, and seven times has been a deputy to General Convention from the Diocese of North Carolina. Evans was elected to a three-year term as vice-president of Province IV in 1997 when Bishop Edward L. Salmon of South Carolina was elected president.

Due to health issues, Salmon recently resigned. Evans will fill his unexpired term until June 2000.

Her vice-president post will be filled by election at the summer meeting of the Province IV Synod at Kanuga. According to national canons, because the president is a lay person, the vice-president must be a bishop and will serve on the Presiding Bishop's Council of Advice.

James Kelsey was elected bishop of Northern Michigan on the first ballot during the diocesan convention February 6. The two other candidates, who finished far behind in the voting, were Katherine Glenn, vicar of the Episcopal Mission in San Luis Valley in the Diocese of Colorado, and Meredith Hunt, canon at the cathedral in the Diocese of Michigan.

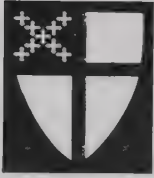
Kelsey, who is ministry development coordinator for the Diocese of Northern Michigan, is a graduate of the General Theological Seminary. He served in the Dioceses of Vermont and Oklahoma before arriving in 1989 in Northern Michigan, where he established a diocesan-wide strategy for cluster ministries.

He will succeed retiring Bishop Tom Ray. Kelsey and his wife, Mary, have three children ranging in age from 16 to 20.

Kelsey will be consecrated July 24 in Marquette.

The Episcopal Church Foundation has announced that **Fred Osborn** has joined the Foundation as its director of gift planning. He will be responsible for providing leadership in the Foundation's program of philanthropic services for all churches and Episcopal entities. Osborn's previous position was as director of development for the Nature Conservancy of New York.

He is a seasoned lay professional having worked in financial administration for the Dioceses of Massachusetts, Maine and Connecticut and as director of the former Office of Planned Giving at the Church Center. He was the first director of the Foundation's national support program for planned giving.



news features

99-010

Surviving Delany sister laid to rest in North Carolina

by E. T. Malone, Jr.

(ENS) Sarah Louise Delany, last surviving child of Bishop Henry Beard Delany, was laid to rest in Raleigh, North Carolina, February 1 in Mount Hope Cemetery on a quiet hillside in the city where she was born 109 years ago.

Miss Delany, known familiarly as "Sadie," was thrust into the national limelight in the last decade of her life after she and her centenarian sister Elizabeth "Bessie" Delany, a retired dentist, in 1993 authored a book called *Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years*. It recounted their experiences growing up in the segregated South and later in New York during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s.

They had been "discovered" by Amy Hill Hearth, a writer on assignment for *The New York Times*, who had visited them in 1991 to write a feature story about these unusual sisters who had both passed the 100-year mark and still lived together alone in their own home. Fascinated with their intelligence, wit, and humor, and realizing the uniqueness of their view of 20th century American history, Hearth convinced the Delany sisters to tell their story and she helped them write the book.

Instantly popular, the volume found itself on *The New York Times* best-seller list and spawned a theatre version that toured the country. Hearth worked with the sisters to publish *The Delany Sisters' Book of Everyday Wisdom* in 1994. After her sister Elizabeth's death in 1995, Sadie Delany, at age 107, wrote a third book called *On My Own*. Ironically, just two days after her funeral, the theatre version of *Having Our Say* was scheduled to be performed by the Playmakers Repertory Company in nearby Chapel Hill.

Fifth generation speaks

Brandi Delany, the 18-year-old great-grandniece of Sadie, said in a brief eulogy before the packed funeral congregation at St. Augustine's Chapel that she was not sad. "I grew up knowing of her as Aunt Sadie, a lady lively for her age. It wasn't until reading the book that I really learned about what Aunt Sadie and Dr. Bessie accomplished. They were not just a home economics teacher and a dentist, but pioneers. Aunt Sadie was the kind of strong woman that I aspire to become. It is appropriate that we say goodbye to her on the campus of St. Augustine's College, where she always felt at home."

Delany, born September 19, 1889, was one of 10 children of Henry Beard Delany (1858-1928) and Nanny Logan Delany (1861-1956).

Her father, born a slave, graduated from St. Augustine's College in Raleigh and was employed there as a teacher, later becoming vice-president. He was called to the Episcopal priesthood and in 1918 consecrated as Suffragan Bishop of North Carolina, the first African-American ever elected bishop in the Episcopal Church. Continuing to reside in the Delany cottage on the St. Augustine's campus, he served as bishop until his death 10 years later. Mrs. Delany was matron of the school, teaching what was then called "domestic sciences," and the Delany Building, still in use today, was named in her honor.

Cheerleaders for change

Following in her mother's footsteps, Sadie Delany became the first home economics teacher of color in the New York Public School System. Bessie became only the second woman of color licensed to practice dentistry in New York. They both taught school in the South for years to save money to move to New York, where Sadie received her undergraduate degree from Columbia University in 1920 and her master's degree in 1925. The sisters were lifelong companions and never married, attributing their long lives to the fact that "we never had husbands to worry us to death."

Already elderly by the time of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, they were active cheerleaders of change in American society. When their first book was published, they urged that it be viewed not as black history, or feminine history, but as American history.

Although they met many celebrities, the sisters stuck to their beliefs. "The whole time in Harlem, we lived the same way that we did in Raleigh," Sadie wrote. "We didn't change our values or behavior one bit. Every Sunday was the Lord's day, and you could find us, sure as daylight, at St. Martin's Episcopal Church. We were very proud of the Delany name, and because of our self-discipline it came to mean in Harlem what it had meant in North Carolina—that is, it stood for integrity."

--Ted Malone is communications officer for the Diocese of North Carolina.

99-011

Civil war in Sierra Leone marked by stories of heroism and heartbreak

by Margaret Larom

(ENS) Stories of horror and heroism, hope and heartbreak have emerged from Episcopalians since the terrifying weeks in January and February when sadistic rebels sought to gain control of Sierra Leone.

Families and friends in the United States, shocked by reports of new atrocities in the most recent flare-up of an ongoing civil war, began a desperate search for news of loved ones in the Diocese of Freetown, part of the Province of West Africa.

For two weeks they could not get through. The telephones were not working. Williamson Ade Ademu-John, a parishioner of Christ Church, Dayton (Diocese of Southern Ohio), heard from a relative in North Carolina that his nieces in Freetown had been killed. He prayed it wasn't true. He had seen them just a few months before, when he and three other Episcopalians participated in an ecumenical delegation.

Meanwhile, parishioners of St. John's, Gloucester, and St. Mary's, Rockport (Diocese of Massachusetts) were appealing to the Episcopal Church Center staff for news on behalf of Marjorie Fergusson. With her sons, Nathan and Arthur, she had been living in Gloucester since August 1997, when she fled Freetown after the coup that dislodged President Tejan Kabbah. But her 84-year-old mother, an aunt, and two brothers had remained behind. "Please do what you can," begged Maud Warren of St. John's. "These are very, very precious people to us."

Then, on January 25, Richard Parkins, director of Episcopal Migration Ministries, received a collect telephone call from the Rev. Canon Ajayi E. Nicol, vicar of St. Charles Parish Church, Regent (outside Freetown). Parkins had visited this historic parish (founded in 1816) as part of the ecumenical delegation. Nicol reported that, though stranded, he and his parishioners were safe. His church, bombed in February 1998 but repaired and rededicated in June, was unscathed.

Holy Trinity Church in Freetown had been burned to the ground but St. George's Cathedral was standing. Bishop Julius Lynch was forced to abandon his residence and keep moving for safety, but was managing to avoid serious danger. He would try to reach him, though it would mean walking nine miles. (The next day, we knew he had succeeded. A handwritten fax arrived at the Church Center in New York from Bishop Lynch: "Situation desperate. Thank God for safety.... Urgent assistance needed.")

Parkins and Nicol promised to keep in touch. The telephone became a precious conduit for news and encouragement. During the next call, we explained about Marjorie Fergusson and her family. "I know her," he said. "Tell Marjorie they are all safe. And their homes were spared."

But for Ademu-John, the telephone brought devastating confirmation of his worst fears. One brother, Daniel, was shot in the back but is recovering. The home of another brother, Joseph, was attacked by rebels. They made everyone lie down on the floor. They beat my brother severely, then shot his four daughters right in front of him. Two were killed, along with the husband of one, who was an American Methodist Episcopal pastor. Two were wounded.

"Because of the fighting, and the fear, the family, though members of St. George's Cathedral, had to bury the bodies in the back yard. Now, the Health Department has asked them to exhume the bodies and bury them properly." The girls who survived are in Netland Hospital, on the western edge of Freetown. The doctor caring for them is a good friend of the family. Ironically, he is using medical supplies sent by Ademu-John in a 40-foot container he had organized last year.

As people in Sierra Leone began to pick up their shattered lives, friends and family in the USA began to send money and try to mobilize other assistance. Canon Nicol has trekked into Freetown several times to meet with the bishop and assess the situation. Two vicarages in Waterloo were burned. Of 47 active clergy in the diocese, only one had not yet been located. On February 7, Nicol called to say, "We rang the church bells for the first time since January 6." But the situation in the country remained tense."

The Episcopal Church has joined with other denominations, relief agencies and refugee organizations in urging the United States to commit to "meaningful action for peace" in Sierra Leone. The February meeting of the Executive Council in Denver approved a resolution calling for a broad range of actions by the U.S. government and the United Nations. The council called upon our church community to pray for peace, and commended

to God's care "the brave leaders of our church who have so valiantly stood with their people amidst this conflict, and have offered whatever moral and material support to relieve their suffering"

The Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief has committed \$25,000 to assist the people of Sierra Leone. (Contributions may be mailed to the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, c/o Bankers Trust Company, Box 12043, Newark, NJ 07101.)

—Margaret Larom is director of world mission interpretation at the Episcopal Church Center.

99-012

Tutu speaks of truth and reconciliation at meetings in Minnesota

by Susan Barksdale

(ENS) Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa was in Minnesota the first weekend in February to present a special award honoring chaplains who offered their lives to save troops in World War II and to speak at a special forum.

Tutu presented the first humanitarian awards given by the Immortal Chaplains Foundation, honoring four Army chaplains—Roman Catholic, Methodist, Dutch Reformed and Jewish—who gave their life jackets to soldiers on the troop ship *Dorchester* that was sunk in 1943. According to eyewitness accounts, the chaplains stood on the deck of the ship as it sank, locked in prayer.

"What we commemorate today seems to go against the grain of the world," Tutu said in a press conference before the awards ceremony. He said that true greatness comes in not being obsessed by it, citing Mother Teresa as an example of someone who "gave" her life on behalf of others. "Ultimately the world will get it, that the secret of greatness is that you don't strive for it."

When asked what intrigued him about the story of the chaplains, he said, "Basically the wonder of human beings going against the law of our nature" for self-preservation. "Things like this make you proud to be a human being. Human beings are wonderful—we are made for good ness and love. This is the way God created us," he said.

Tutu's face shone as he discussed his favorite topics of forgiveness and reconciliation. He warned against stereotyping people in our striving for peace, offering as an example the tendency to demonize Saddam Hussein of Iraq and with him all Muslims. That would be the same as demonizing all Christians because of the activities of the Ku Klux Klan, Tutu said, reminding his audience that there are extremists in all religious communities.

Healing the wounds

When asked what the people of South Africa had learned in the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Tutu said, "People need the opportunity to tell their story. In telling the story, there is a healing that happens. Without forgiveness there is no future." The commission, chaired by Tutu, sought to heal the wounds of apartheid by inviting

those who had been involved in violence to come forward with their confessions and to ask for forgiveness.

Addressing the difficult task of making peace in a world that seems to prefer violence, Tutu admitted that he has frequently been very angry with God. "If I were God, I would have sent many lightning bolts. But our God is quite extraordinary. God has an incredible reverence for who we are. God gives us the space. The omnipotent God becomes impotent, weak. God then waits for us, for those who get passionate about goodness, love and peace."

The first Immortal Chaplains Prizes for Humanity were presented posthumously to Charles W. David, Jr., an African-American mess attendant on the troop ship *Dorchester* who risked his life to pull survivors from the sea during rescue operations, and to Amy Biehl, the young American Fulbright scholar who was stoned to death in South Africa in 1993 while working to heal the wounds of apartheid.

In a carefully guarded surprise, Tutu himself was the recipient of a third prize.

The difficult work of reconciliation

Tutu spoke to a packed audience of about 1500 at the Town Hall Forum at Westminster Presbyterian Church in downtown Minneapolis, describing the difficult work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

"We were in a pickle in South Africa," Tutu began. While many were predicting that the nation was on the verge of civil war as blacks assumed majority control, Tutu said, "It didn't happen. We won. We wouldn't have made it without you. We won because you supported us and you prayed for us. Our victory is your victory."

The Town Hall audience, and those listening on National Public Radio, heard stories of the brutal atrocities of apartheid, illustrating "the extent of the evil." South Africa could have descended into the violence that plagues so many parts of the world, Tutu admitted, but chose "to walk in a more costly path—the path of forgiveness, the path of reconciliation."

Tutu said that God has been "very good to us. He has given us a Nelson Mandela. Everyone expected Mandela to come out after his 27 years in prison bristling with resentment and anger and bitterness—and a lust for revenge. But he did not," Tutu said. "Instead he invited his white jailer to attend his inauguration as a guest. He later took his white prosecutor, who had asked for the death sentence, to lunch. No, he did not seek revenge but took the way of forgiveness and reconciliation and healing."

Capacity for good and evil

The archbishop pointed out that human beings "have an incredible capacity for evil. When we hear of these perpetrators, we think, There but for the grace of God, go you and I." Yet they are "ordinary human beings," he added. "They may commit the most horrendous deeds, but that does not turn them into monsters. They still remain children of God."

The whole process of reconciliation is based on the belief that we have a capacity to change, that we are capable of good, Tutu argued. "We can achieve the most ghastly things and we can be some of the most compassionate and caring and loving people the world has ever known. Forgiveness is not cheap, reconciliation is not easy."

During the hearings of the TRC, Tutu said that members heard gruesome stories of death and torture—and yet he listened in wonder and amazement, "bowed over at the goodness of people." He added, "On many occasions we felt that the right response to what

was happening in front of us was to take off our shoes, because we were on holy ground. We needed to open the wounds, to cleanse them so that they wouldn't fester, to pour balm on them."

With a chuckle of amazement at God's abundant mercy, Tutu asked, "Why did God choose South Africa? We are not virtuous, we are not even smart. It's because God has a sense of humor" in choosing such an unlikely lot. "We are going to succeed not because we deserve to succeed. We are going to succeed for the sake of God's grace."

Tutu, who is currently a visiting professor at Emory University in Atlanta, also joined the congregation at St. Mark's Cathedral in Minneapolis for services honoring Absalom Jones, the first African-American ordained to the priesthood in the Episcopal Church.

—Susan Barksdale edits *Soundings*, the newspaper of the Diocese of Minnesota.

99-013

Easter Message from the Presiding Bishop

Resurrection happens not only to Jesus but to us as well, and not only to us but to the whole creation. Resurrection is not a theological proposition but a fact of life. For Mary Magdalene and the other women who came early to the tomb with their spices, resurrection was an assault upon everything they knew; it was the overturning of all order and predictability. It thrust them forward beyond the pots and jars of ointment they carried, and the time-honored rituals of burying the dead they had learned from their mothers. Suddenly and without preparation they were assaulted by the angelic declaration, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" Why indeed? And yet our pale and ordinary days and our low expectations are constantly being challenged by an expansion of life, an enlarged vision that will not fit easily within our immediate and limited frame of reference.

The power of God working within us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine, and altogether passes our understanding. For this reason resurrection and the freedom it brings can be strangely unwelcome. We would rather stay with the predictable, the defined, the perspectives which make sense and fit with life as we understand it. God in Christ will have none of that. Resurrection undid the fear-bound apostles huddled behind locked doors. It turned a denying Peter into a herald of the Risen One able to embrace what formerly he had shunned and called unclean. It transformed Paul, the obsessive persecutor, into an apostle of the very one he had vowed to eradicate from the consciousness of his people.

Resurrection knows no bounds, honors no limitations, it simply happens: "The wind blows where it chooses and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is for everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). To be born of the Spirit is to be a son or daughter of the resurrection, not just for our own sake but for the sake of the world and the whole creation which, as Paul tells us, is groaning in travail waiting for God's liberating intervention.

So why are we waiting when, by virtue of one baptism into Christ, we have been caught up into Christ's resurrection life and ongoing ministry of reconciling and transforming mercy? May we—each one of us who claims Christ as our savior—be emboldened by the Spirit to be for one another ministers of all that the risen Christ intends and desires, even

when our own small worlds and fragile reality are stretched to the breaking point and beyond. May those who have borne witness to the power and force of resurrection before us—Mary Magdalene, Peter, Paul—and those of our own day support us with their example and prayer, and may Christ, as the poet G. M. Hopkins wonderfully expresses it, ever “easter in us, be a dayspring to the dimness of us, be a crimson-cresseted east.”

Frank T. Griswold
Presiding Bishop and Primate

99-014

Sudanese lawyer brings grim message of human rights abuses to U.S. audiences

by James Solheim

(ENS) Leaning across the podium in a conference room at the Episcopal Church Center in New York, the tall, distinguished lawyer from the Sudan said, “It is good to know that you have friends. And to know that the number is growing as more seek understanding of the problems we face, wanting to know what is happening.”

The message Abel Alier brought to his audiences during a nine-day visit to churches and human rights advocates in America was a grim one as tensions mount between the Islamic government based in Khartoum and the armed resistance in the largely Christian southern part of the Sudan. Describing the estimated million Sudanese “internally displaced” in the north, Alier said, “They are in the wilderness,” facing problems common to refugees elsewhere in the world, without any international support.

The churches, especially the Roman Catholics and Episcopalians, “recognize this plight and know the geography of this wilderness,” he said. They are also united by the persecution. In trying to provide desperately needed health care and basic education the churches are “in full confrontation with the government,” said Alier, a former vice president of the republic and former president of the High Executive Council in the Southern Region of the Sudan. He is also a member of the Permanent Court of International Arbitration at the Hague.

“The government has a different agenda,” Alier pointed out, demolishing schools and prayer centers in a deliberate attempt to create “disarray” in the displaced communities. And it tries to “criminalize” anyone who attempts to help the refugees, most recently charging 26 Roman Catholic priests with offenses against the state. Alier, who is defending the priests, said that it is clear now that three of the 26 were tortured to death, two escaped and the others face trial in a military court. If convicted, they could face the death penalty.

Africa’s largest country, the Sudan has enjoyed only brief intervals without armed conflict since its independence in 1956. The military regime in the north continues to brutally repress opposition and is engaged in what one exile has called “a war of visions.” Yet its persistent human rights abuses do not demand the attention of the international community, distracted by conflicts in which they have more at stake, according to those who have studied the situation.

Alier said that there is some talk of a political settlement because the government realizes that war is costly, that it isolates them from the international community, and that "the oppressed populace is a ticking bomb." Encouraged by the "growing awareness of the church which is helping to deepen the faith of the churches in the south," he argued that "there is still a need for greater solidarity, partnership and cooperation with churches worldwide."

When asked about the issue of slavery, Alier said that it has a long history in some parts of the Sudan and "the government gives support" to those who traffic in human beings. "They kill men, take women and children, send them north, and even as far as some of the Gulf States," he said. The government even buys children for use as soldiers in the future, often returning them to fight against their own people.

Describing the layers of complexity in Sudanese society, Alier said that the war is "racial, religious and cultural. The government is on an Islamic crusade." Moderates are either in exile or attempting to shape political opposition. Unless the people are convinced that diversity has a place in their society, the future does not hold much hope, he admitted. "In a free society diversity is perceived as positive."

--James Solheim is director of the Episcopal Church's Office of News and Information.

Photographs included in this issue of ENS:

1. Griswold preaches at Denver meeting of Executive Council (99-001)
2. Church celebrates tenth anniversary of first woman bishop (99-003) [two selections]
3. 'After Lambeth' conference in Britain draws 270 (99-004)
4. Margaret (Midge) Roof appointed to ecumenical staff (99-008)
5. Sadie Delany laid to rest February 1 (99-010)
6. Archbishop Tutu speaks at forum in Minnesota (99-012)
7. Sudanese lawyer presses human rights issue during U.S. visit (99-014)

(All photos are also available in color)

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